

Message Text

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UNESCO

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TAGS: AORG, UNESCO, CA
SUBJECT: CANADA ACCEDES TO UNESCO CONVENTION ON MEANS OF
PROHIBITING AND PREVENTING THE ILLICIT IMPORT, EXPORT AND
TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF CULTURAL PROPERTY

REF: OTTAWA 850 AND A-69, MARCH 17, 1978

1. GOC ANNOUNCED MARCH 28 THAT IT HAD ACCEDED TO REFERENCE
CONVENTION AND WAS DEPOSITING INSTRUMENT OF RATIFICATION
AT UNESCO HEADQUARTERS IN PARIS SAME DAY. CANADA THUS
BECOMES 37TH MEMBER STATE OF UNESCO TO ACCEDE TO
CONVENTION.

2. FOLLOWING IS DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS PRESS
RELEASE ANNOUNCING ACCESSION:

BEGIN TEXT.

THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS, THE HONOURABLE
DON JAMIESON, AND THE SECRETARY OF STATE, THE HONOURABLE
JOHN ROBERTS, ANNOUNCED TODAY (MARCH 28) THAT CANADA HAS
ACCEDED TO THE UNESCO CONVENTION ON THE MEANS OF
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PROHIBITING AND PREVENTING THE ILLICIT IMPORT, EXPORT AND
TRANSFER OF OWNERSHIP OF CULTURAL PROPERTY.

THE SIGNED DOCUMENTS WILL BE DEPOSITED AT UNESCO HEAD-
QUARTERS IN PARIS TODAY AND THE CONVENTION WILL COME INTO
FORCE IN CANADA ON JUNE 28, 1978. ON THAT DATE, CANADA
WILL BECOME THE 37TH MEMBER STATE OF UNESCO TO ACCEDE TO

THIS CONVENTION, ADOPTED IN 1970 BY THE 16TH SESSION OF
THE UNESCO GENERAL CONFERENCE.

CANADA'S ACCESSION TO THE CONVENTION WAS MADE POSSIBLE BY
THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE CULTURAL PROPERTY EXPORT AND
IMPORT ACT ON SEPTEMBER 6, 1977. THIS FEDERAL LEGISLATION,
WHICH WAS THE SUBJECT OF EXTENSIVE CONSULTATION WITH ALL
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS PRIOR TO ITS ADOPTION BY PARLIAMENT,
IMPLEMENTS IN CANADA THE INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS IMPOSED
BY THE CONVENTION. IT CONTAINS PROVISIONS HINDERING THE
IMPORT TO CANADA OF CULTURAL PROPERTY ILLEGALLY EXPORTED
FROM COUNTRIES PARTY TO THE CONVENTION, AND THEY IN TURN
AGREE TO INHIBIT THE IMPORT OF CULTURAL PROPERTY ILLEGALLY
EXPORTED FROM CANADA.

MR. JAMIESON SAID, "THERE HAS BEEN GROWING CONCERN IN
RECENT YEARS OVER ILLICIT TRAFFIC IN CULTURAL PROPERTY.
NOW, IF A CO-SIGNING STATE REQUESTS THE RECOVERY OF AN
OBJECT ILLEGALLY IMPORTED TO THIS COUNTRY, THE ATTORNEY
GENERAL WILL INSTITUTE THE NECESSARY LEGAL PROCEEDINGS.
CANADIAN COURTS WILL THEN DETERMINE WHAT COMPENSATION IS
TO BE PAID TO A BONA FIDE CANADIAN PURCHASER BY THE
RECIPROCATING STATE WHEN THE OBJECT IS TO BE RETURNED TO
THAT STATE".

MR. ROBERTS STATED THAT, "THE CANADIAN GOVERNMENT BELIEVES
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THAT THE TRANSFER OF CULTURAL PROPERTY FROM ONE COUNTRY
TO ANOTHER IS NO LONGER A MATTER OF INDIFFERENCE TO THE
COMMUNITY OF NATIONS. BY IMPLEMENTING THE CULTURAL
PROPERTY EXPORT AND IMPORT ACT, THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
HAS ASSUMED ITS RESPONSIBILITY TO ACT AS GUARDIAN OF THE
HERITAGE OF ALL CANADIANS AND BY ACCEDING TO THE UNESCO
CONVENTION, HAS TAKEN AN IMPORTANT STEP IN RECOGNIZING
THAT THIS RESPONSIBILITY EXTENDS TO THE CULTURAL HERITAGE
OF ALL MANKIND".

END TEXT. PLACKE

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